ARMY ARCHERD

JUST FOR VARIETY

12/20/91

GOOD MORNING: A firsthand report on how the dissolution of the Soviet Union is affecting Cuba comes to us from director Randa Haines, just back from the Havana Film Fest with "The Doctor." "I'm still in cultural shock," she reported. "There are long lines for gas—since they aren't getting it from Russia. Food is in short supply. At an ice cream place that normally served 28 flavors, now three. Everyone is very worried." She met Fidel Castro, "who is incredibly charismatic. He apologized for the lack of the usual (festival) celebrations. But," Haines noted, "everyone was very generous." She said Disney made a print of "The Doctor" with Spanish subtitles for her to take to the fest—she flew out of Mexico City via Cubana Airlines. They gave her a standing ovation for "Doctor," also when she was announced for "Children of a Lesser God." She didn't know how they were able to see "God'—but they did. Raines is admittedly an aficionado of Latin music and said she danced until 5 ayem and is prepping her next film, "Salsa—A Love Story," about a North American woman and a Latin man. "And it involves dance," she smiled. Haines is encouraged for Oscar chances on "The Doctor" by crix remembrance of "Silence of the Lambs," released in February—her movie was a summer release ... She was so impressed by young Cuban filmmakers and fans, she returns in March to teach at a Havana film school ... Talking Oscar: Chuck Workman is again assigned by producer Gil Cates to produce a seg—this one a six-minute tribute to comedy—200 pix clix ... Leonard Engelman, chairman of the Makeup Artists Committee for the Acad, now has his own cosmetics line—Taut.

While Sen. Ted Kennedy's office told me the Kennedy family will have no comments on "JFK," former Tex. Gov. John Connally is skedded to give his opinion Monday on "CBS This Morning" after paying to see the movie at a local theater near his ranch this weekend ... The second "opening night" party for Joan Collins and the "Private Lives" cast was hosted by Allan Carr, at Chasen's. Collins remains remarkable—she bounced into the party after the wordy Noel Coward legiter, which includes considerable Collins calisthenics. Collins is as exuberant as the (very) young actress we first met on the set of "The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing" back in 1955 at 20th-Fox. "But I nearly had cardiac arrest, darling," she said about the workout on the boards. Would she return to a series after the planned short run on B'way? "I never say 'never' about anything any more," she laughed. Sister Jackie was not present at the party—she was at husband Oscar Lerman's bedside at Century City Hospital where he's being treated for back problems. He told us he hopes to be home this weekend ... Yesterday, the lunch bunch at Chasen's ate by candlelight—the windstorm KO'd electricity.

A new musical may be making its way to B'way: "Dennis the Musical" which bowed at the Folly in K.C., "has potential for further productions," wrote *Variety's* John Quinn. And Elliot Martin was in to see it with an eye to B'way, reports Ernest Chambers, who penned the book, lyrics by Richard Enquist and Chambers, music by Jeff Church. Gavin MacLeod wings in to see "Dennis" as well. Chambers will also exec produce "Dennis the Menace" at WB with John Hughes as producer of the movie based on Hank Ketcham's comic strip. The busy Chambers is also readying "Freeing the Whales" with Martin Bregman ... The Armed Services YMCA of Oceanside brings 15 Marines to cheer residents of the MPTV Country House today—after they salute Ronnie Reagan at his office ... Tom Marshall, who bought the Wheeler Hot Springs hotel in Ojai ($4.8 million), booked the Grammy-winning Manhattan Transfer for a one-niter, tomorrow ... At Paramount, the fourth Project Robin Hood (food for the needy) brought out: Chris Burke, Dana Delany, Morton Downey Jr., Robert Englund, Soleil Moon Frye, Teri Garr, Jon Lovitz, Dennis Miller, Bob Saget, Charlene Tilton, Mario Van Peebles, etc. ... Carol Connors penned two of the tunes ("Every Day Should Be Christmas" and the title tune, "A Gift of Hope") on "The Christmas Album—A Gift of Hope" whose proceeds benefit research at children's hospitals around the country. Singers include Sinatras, Frank, Frank Jr., Nancy Jr., plus Lorna Luft, Susan Anton and—Magic Johnson ... Friends were happy to see June Haver MacMurray dining out at Madame Wu's.